



# FAST FACTS

## SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

MARCH 2024 • REF FF:003:02

Slip, trip and falls (STF's) personal injury claims against the State have remained high over the past five years despite STF's being a preventable incident in most cases. The State Claims Agency have identified that such claims have extensive direct and indirect costs. Indirect costs include absenteeism, replacement of personnel resulting from absenteeism, additional administration costs and loss of service and expertise. These types of incidents can affect our employees, subcontractors and visitors to our sites.

Figures from the Health & Safety Authority, 2021 show that in healthcare STF's on the same level (not from a height) accounted for 390 non-fatal healthcare incidents.



This was the second-highest reported accident trigger in the Health & Social Care Sector. 25% of reported incidents resulted in the person involved being absent from the workplace for over one month.

### Prevention of Slips, Trips & Falls

There are many simple ways to control slips, trips and falls risks and prevent accidents in your workplace. See the following tips:

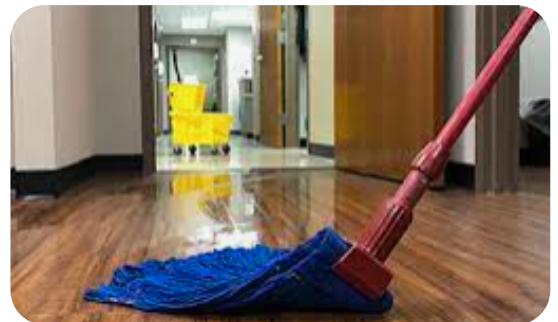
#### Wet Floors

Regarding wet floors:

- There must be effective arrangements for both routine cleaning and dealing with spills promptly including the use of signage
- Pedestrians must be excluded until the floor is dry
- Use the correct cleaning methods for the type of floor
- Consider the use of slip resistant flooring material
- Use entrance matting where necessary

#### RISK ASSESSMENT

Managers need to decide what in the workplace can cause harm. This must be done by completing a risk assessment of the work area to include the work tasks. This will identify if control measures are adequate, or if additional measures are required. This risk assessment must be completed on the generic risk assessment form.



#### REMEMBER !

In healthcare, people entering our facilities and workplaces may be more vulnerable due to their current health condition, limited mobility and/or other physical disabilities. This must be considered when assessing the risks from slip, trip and fall hazards.

#### When to use Hazard Signage

Simply put - use signs when you need to alert / remind people of the presence of a slippery substance on a walking surface.



Signs should only be used where hazards cannot be avoided or removed. Overuse and leaving signs in place can cause complacency as staff become "blind" to the hazard. Remember to remove signage when the area is safe and floor has dried.

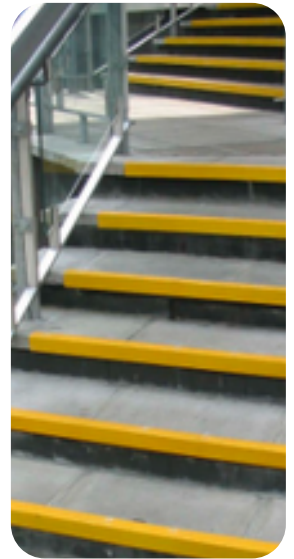
## Flooring & Work Environment

The following should be considered:

- Flooring should be appropriate to the task/work being undertaken, e.g. non slip flooring in catering
- Ensure damaged or worn flooring is repaired or replaced.
- Keep walkways and work areas clear of obstructions.
- Consideration should be given to external surfaces, particularly during inclement weather conditions
- Encourage staff to keep the workplace tidy

## Stairs & Steps

- Changes in level should be clearly highlighted to alert people
- A handrail at an appropriate height that contrasts with the surroundings should be present
- Stairs and steps must have slip resistance properties, particularly at the leading edge (Nosing)
- Ensure they are free from trip hazards and/or obstacles
- Make sure lighting is sufficient and that slopes or steps are clearly visible



## Footwear

Consider the following:

- Where a risk assessment identifies that floors cannot be kept clean and dry at all times, slip-resistant footwear may be required to help prevent slip accidents.
- If footwear is supplied as personal protective equipment (PPE), it must be worn as required.
- In areas where PPE is not required, footwear should comply with local policies and consider the working environment and potential work exposures.

## General Housekeeping

General rules to follow:

- Work places should adopt clean as you go practices
- Employees must ensure that personal belongings are stored away safely so as not to create trip hazards
- Extension cords and trailing cables must be avoided
- A cleaning log should be maintained noting surfaces cleaned, when and by whom tasks were undertaken
- Where dilution of cleaning products are required this must be done in line with the Safety Data Sheet and manufacturer instructions



**Investigate** all incidents, feedback the learning to employees and if necessary review current risk assessment and control measures.

## Monitor & Review

Control measures must be evaluated regularly. This should be done through a monitoring and review system. Risk assessments must be kept up to date and must be reviewed when there is:

- a significant workplace change to the premises, plant, work practices or procedures
- evidence that the risk assessment is no longer valid

Amend the risk assessment as necessary following the review. It is best practice and HSE policy to review risk assessments at least annually.

To assist in the identification of STF's hazards in your workplace, a Slips, Trips and Falls Checklist is available to download. *For more information, please visit the NHSF page on [Slips, Trips and Falls](#).*